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LEVIN & ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS TO DEVELOP MASTER PLAN FOR FORD THEATRES

Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky Funds Master Plan Development

Levin & Associates Architects have been selected to develop a comprehensive master plan for the John Anson Ford Theatres. The firm, headed by President and Principal Brenda A. Levin, FAIA, comes to the project with a wealth of experience in revitalizing and enhancing historic sites. Levin has worked on similar rehabilitation projects, including the Griffith Observatory Renovation, Frank Lloyd Wright's Hollyhock House, the Bradbury Building and Los Angeles City Hall Restoration.

Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, who represents the Third District where the Ford Theatres are located, provided \$350,000 in Third District Capital Improvement funds to support the master plan. "The time has come to devise the kind of comprehensive strategy to guide the Ford's development that only a master plan can provide," Yaroslavsky said. "The County has invested \$6.1 million in capital improvements to the Ford over the past two decades. These have greatly enhanced the visitor experience there, but at the same time they've only been piecemeal solutions to upgrade a facility originally built in 1920. The Ford needs to envision how to maximize its services to patrons in the long term."

"There was strong competition among several outstanding firms competing to develop the Ford master plan," said Ron Rosen, President of the Los Angeles County Arts Commission. "This made the choice difficult. We're excited and honored to have the opportunity to be working with the selected firm of Levin & Associates."

The site, located on Cahuenga Blvd. East in the Hollywood Hills, encompasses two theatres: the 1200-seat outdoor Ford Amphitheatre and the 87-seat indoor [Inside] the Ford. The Ford Amphitheatre will open its 2010 summer season on May 24; nearly 100 shows are on the schedule, which runs through mid-October. A full schedule is available at www.FordTheatres.org. The [Inside] theatre hosts a new play series from November through April.

The Ford is marking its 90th year in 2010. It was built by Christine Wetherill Stevenson in 1920 as the site of her *Pilgrimage Play* on the life of Jesus Christ. The building is in the neo-Judaic style and the distinctive towers that flank the amphitheatre's stage resemble the gates of Jerusalem. More about the Ford's rich history can be found by visiting the Ford Web site and clicking on "About Us," then "Mission/History."

The master plan, which is due to be completed by the end of 2010, will make recommendations for:

- Site expansion and location of future buildings
- Preservation and emphasis of the historic elements of the theatre and surrounding buildings
- Improvements in parking and traffic flow
- Improved visibility
- Incorporation of environmentally sustainable (LEED) technology
- Expansion and/or upgrade of the outdoor amphitheatre and indoor theatre

The Levin firm was selected through a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Proposals were reviewed by a committee including representatives of the Arts Commission, the Ford Theatre Foundation and the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation. The Ford Theatre Foundation is the non-profit organization that helps support Ford programming. The Ford Theatres are located in a County Regional Park.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Architect **Brenda A. Levin**, FAIA, Levin & Associates Architects, is known for revitalizing Los Angeles' urban, historic and cultural form. For 30 years her architecture firm has pioneered the preservation and re-definition of important historic landmarks of the city. In addition to her work at Griffith Observatory, other prominent projects include: Grand Central and Chapman markets; the Oviatt, Fine Arts and Bradbury buildings; the Wilvern Theater; and Los Angeles City Hall. The firm's architectural work also includes the design of new educational and cultural buildings. Among their projects are campus buildings at Scripps, Occidental, Whittier and Pitzer colleges. Recent work includes design of the Autry and Southwest museums and Wilshire Boulevard Temple master plan. Levin studied design and painting at Carnegie-Mellon University, graduated with a degree in graphic design from New York University, and earned a Master of Architecture degree from Harvard University.

The **Los Angeles County Arts Commission**, Laura Zucker, Executive Director, provides leadership in cultural services of all disciplines for the largest county in the United States, encompassing 88 municipalities. The Arts Commission, in addition to programming the John Anson Ford Theatres, administers a grants program that funds more than 300 nonprofit arts organizations annually; provides leadership and staffing to support the regional blueprint for arts education, *Arts for All*; oversees the County's Civic Art Program for capital projects; funds the largest arts internship program in the country in conjunction with the Getty Foundation; and supports the Los Angeles County Cultural Calendar on ExperienceLA.com. The Commission also produces free community programs, including the L.A. Holiday Celebration broadcast nationally, and a year-round music program that funds more than 40 free concerts each year in public sites. The 2010-11 President of the Arts Commission is Ronald D. Rosen. For more information please consult the Arts Commission online press kit: <http://lacountyarts.org/page/pubnewspress>

The **Ford Theatre Foundation**, a not-for-profit organization founded in 1994, supports the performing arts and education activities that are presented at the Ford Theatres. The Foundation's Community Bridges program builds audiences by encouraging and facilitating participation in the theatres' programs and brings Ford performers to youth and social service centers based in Asian Pacific Islander and Latino communities throughout Los Angeles County. The Foundation presents the Big!World!Fun! Family Series, and the free, interactive J.A.M. (Jazzed and Motivated) Sessions during the Ford's summer season.